

Wirral's Economic Recovery Plan

1. Introduction

Since the onset of the recession, the Council and our partners have worked hard to ensure that we properly understand how it is impacting on the local economy, and in response have launched a number of initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact on businesses and the local community. The Council continues to lead partners in taking forward a co-ordinated and coherent response to the economic situation.

Members will be aware that previous recession reports have outlined the latest impact of global economic conditions on Wirral's economy, and identified the various steps taken by the Council and its partners to respond to the recession.

However, this report represents a new dimension in Wirral's strategic response to the recession, through the development of a Recovery Plan. This outlines a number of measures to mitigate the impact of the recession, but at the same time maintain momentum on our medium and longer term economic goals and the Investment Strategy.

The Council's overarching vision is to build a more prosperous and equal Wirral. Clearly the strategy being pursued by the Council is to work with partners to mitigate the impact of the recession locally, and at the same time continue to prepare for and develop initiatives to ensure that Wirral is best placed to move forward when the recession is over.

This Recovery Plan therefore sets out:

- The latest economic update on how the local economy is being impacted upon by the recession (Appendix 2);
- an overview of the Council's leadership role in co-ordinating partners and developing responses thus far;
- a structured plan outlining details of the medium and longer term interventions essential to prepare for recovery (Appendix 1)

Wirral's Recovery Plan emphasises the value of a strategic response that keeps the long-term vision and ambition of the council in view. It is important that we retain and refresh that long-term vision and to plan short and medium term responses to the recession within that framework.

This Recovery Plan sets out the strategy being pursued by the Council and our partners to mitigate the impact of the recession locally, but at the same time maintain momentum on our medium and longer term economic goals and our overarching vision to build a more prosperous and equal Wirral.

2. The Role of the Council in Leading Responses

Over the last year, in response to worsening economic conditions, Wirral Council has taken a strong leadership role working with local partners to plan an integrated and comprehensive understanding of – and response to – the recession.

Feedback from partners is being collated in a systematic and co-ordinated way, including:

- through monthly meetings between the Council and business leaders including Wirral Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB);
- across the Council, through a key officers group;
- with strategic partners through the LSP; and
- through a series of wider partnership meetings

These meetings have proved to be an excellent vehicle for gathering intelligence about developments within the local economy and have also provided an opportunity for partners to have a direct input into the Council's policy response to the Recession.

3. Strategic Approach

In responding to the recession, Wirral's approach considers three issues:

Survival: Local businesses must be provided with appropriate support to increase their resilience to the economic downturn. In particular, micro-businesses (which make up the majority of the Wirral business base) have the potential to grow and to generate wealth and jobs, but at present may be at risk from a drop in demand from a few key customers. Without appropriate targeting these businesses may miss out on the vital support or funding to help them ride out the recession.

Bounceback. Local residents who are made redundant or who have found it difficult to access employment during the recession must be provided with the necessary support to help them get back on their feet. Raising awareness of enterprise and helping people to become enterprise-ready can provide an important route back into the labour market and the world of work. This will not only prevent a generation of workers from being lost from the economy due to short-term cyclical difficulties, it will help to stimulate demand and employment and increase the resilience of the local economy during this period of uncertainty.

The next generation. There is a need to ensure that we continue to bring through talented people who bring new ideas and provide the role models to inspire the brightest individuals of the next generation. If this issue is not addressed now, then the problem of worklessness among young people will not just remain, it will get worse, and will result in an increase in worklessness, a rise in long-term unemployment and greater disengagement from the labour market. We must ensure that our young people do not end up outside the labour market.

This additional focus builds on and enhances our existing strategic priorities to grow the economy, tackle worklessness and increase skills.

4. Responding to the Recession

The Council and its partners continue to meet regularly to agree the best ways to support Wirral residents and businesses in the current situation. Over the last year, we have developed a number of opportunities in response to our detailed understanding of the recession. The approach has two key elements with initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact on (a) businesses and (b) the local community. Examples of interventions developed thus far include:

4.1. Support for Businesses

- 4.1.1 Wirral has worked with partners to develop a structured package of support to businesses in a direct response to the recession. This has received considerable interest from businesses. Council officers worked with Business Link and other public sector agencies to design financial and consultancy support for businesses that may not be able to readily access the support currently available.
- 4.1.2 The BIG Grant, established in April 2009 to support small businesses during difficult economic conditions, continues to invest in projects that make a real difference to companies experiencing cash flow and financial planning concerns. It has made a real impact in supporting small companies, and Invest Wirral working in partnership with Business Link North West has strengthened the opportunities available in Wirral
This has resulted in **105 jobs** being created/safeguarded to date.
- 4.1.3 The Think BIG grant, which had its criteria amended in March 2009, has resulted in **361 jobs created and 233 safeguarded** to date. A number of high profile projects have been supported including:
- Bristol-Myers Squibb is investing over £3.7m in its research and development laboratory in Moreton. This investment will provide new specialised laboratories for the development of new dosage forms and drug delivery systems for innovative therapeutic agents, through upgrading and redevelopment of existing facilities. The investment will be supportive of the approximately 100 existing scientific, technical and related jobs at the site.
 - Tulip Ltd, the UK's leading producer of pork and bacon products has announced the creation of 270 new jobs at its production facility in Wirral. In a move that will see over £12m of investment in the Wirral site, Tulip Ltd will create a modern, highly productive and state-of-the-art sausage production facility at Bromborough. The project received financial assistance from Wirral Council and the North West Development Agency (NWDA) to ensure that the investment from Tulip Ltd was made in Wirral.
- 4.1.4 Wirral Council has maximised the use of ERDF resources to appoint three seconded staff from Business Link Northwest to work with Invest Wirral to enhance its work with engaging with local businesses. The three staff (2 Growth Advisors/1 Training and Skills) are all dedicated solely to engaging with Wirral based business.
- 4.1.5 Additional to this, the Wirral Business Forum now has more than 820 members. The Forum comprises regular cluster based meetings for its members but also online support services. The latest forum to come on line will specifically support businesses from the Hamilton Quarter area of Birkenhead.
- 4.1.6 In August, Wirral Council successfully tendered the new business start contract in partnership with the North West Development Agency (NWDA). Wirralbiz were successfully awarded the contract and all partners are confident of continuing the success of the previous programme.

4.2. Apprenticeship Programme

Members will be aware that In April this year, Wirral Council approved the development of The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme. This was in response to feedback from businesses and partners on the adverse impact that the recession was starting to have on the availability of apprenticeship places in the borough. Whilst demand for places from young people continued to be high, employers indicated that they were finding it increasingly difficult to support the business case for employing apprentices and have access to a growing available 'job ready' labour supply.

The Programme was designed around a number of driving principles:

- direct support to businesses in the recession
- engaging new businesses with the launch of the new National Apprenticeship Service
- In return, the employer is expected to offer a minimum 2 year contract of employment to the Apprentice

Wirral Council initially committed £1.7M of our Working Neighbourhoods Funding (WNF) to fund 100 Apprenticeship places on this Programme.

Invest Wirral colleagues have assisted in getting the opportunities highlighted with local employers and have supplied background information on local businesses. The fact that we have worked with partner organisations, including Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership and The National Apprenticeship Service, to deliver The Wirral Apprentice has been identified as a national model of good practice and is being used by North West Employer Organisation (NWEO) to share with other Local Government Associations throughout the country – they have been in touch for our process and preparation information and have invited Wirral's Chief Executive and other senior leaders to an Apprenticeship event at Bentley Motors in Crewe next February.

The City Employment Strategy (CES) recently made available an unallocated £275,000 of ESF Complementary Strand and agreed that this should be used to fund an additional 17 apprenticeships for the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme which took the number of places up to 117.

Since then, given the successful implementation of the Apprenticeship Programme thus far, and the considerable continuing interest shown from businesses (the Programme has been over-subscribed), the Council has recently agreed to use an additional Working Neighbourhoods Funds to support an extra 50 apprenticeships.

The Programme has also been extremely successful in leveraging additional places over and above those that the Council funds. We have secured commitment from a number of employers who are funding apprenticeships themselves. To date, there have been an additional 13 non-funded Apprenticeships (where the employer is paying for them themselves but which were advertised in the same way as the funded ones) and an additional 8 jobs with training. We are confident that these numbers will significantly increase in the coming months.

4.3. Better ICT infrastructure

Fast and reliable internet connectivity are important influences on business decisions on where to locate and relocate. The introduction of a local fibre-optic broadband infrastructure could provide an important source of competitive advantage

Wirral has therefore commissioned a digital infrastructure scoping study with the aim of that will provide Wirral with a world class ICT network to support future development activity and increase investment into the area

4.4. Support to Wirral Residents

Key partners (Wirral Council, Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council) continue to co-ordinate activity through the Wirral Economic Development and Skills Partnership.

Jobcentre Plus and Learning and Skills Council announced a range of additional provision to support those under threat or notice of redundancy and those recently unemployed. The Council continues to ensure that additional activities commissioned through Working Wirral are used to complement mainstream provision, helping to improve local people's skills and employment prospects.

4.5. Working Wirral

The Working Wirral Programme covers a broad range of projects to deliver outputs and activities identified in the Investment Framework. Performance data for April-September 2009 indicates some considerable achievements in numbers of job outputs and increasing skills. These include:

- **Job outputs:** 446 people have got a job. This represents a high performance level, with outputs at 110.6% of target.
- **Qualifications achieved:** 113 qualifications were achieved. This represents 213% performance against target. This is especially good considering the impact of projects with delayed starts.
- **Business Starts:** Total Business Starts achieved for the same period were 157. This exceeds expected targets (144) and indicates continued positive trends in increasing enterprise in Wirral.

Furthermore, a number initiatives launched in response to the recession have had some considerable success. These include:

4.6. Future Jobs Fund

The Department for Work and Pensions has recently approved the Liverpool City Region bid to the Future Jobs Fund launched in the 2009 Budget. The initiative aims to create 150,000 new jobs for unemployed young people in Britain over the next years and a further 50,000 for the 25+ age group in unemployment hotspots. In Wirral, 648 new job opportunities are expected to be delivered during the lifetime of this initiative.

4.7. Construction Employment Integrator

As part of our wider Investment Strategy aims, Wirral has also developed a Construction Employment Integrator (CEI). The Council have designed an innovative project in conjunction with Working Ventures UK to embed targeted training and recruitment practices in order to link people from disadvantaged groups and areas with jobs and training opportunities in growth sectors.

The project will focus initially on the construction industry establishing 'Build Wirral', a comprehensive Construction Employment Integrator, to capitalise on the forecast scale of development in the borough. In essence, the project will:

- Use procurement processes and planning measures to effect change, embedding obligations into public sector contracts to ensure developers and contractors address targeted employment and training issues, including a commitment to apprenticeships;
- Engage with employers and contractors to ensure that recruitment and training provision is more relevant and demand-led; providing the industry with a supply of suitably qualified labour;
- Provide tailored pre-recruitment support and routeways to enable workless people to access jobs in the industry, co-ordinating existing provision and plugging any gaps.

5. Planning for Recovery

5.1 Despite prevailing economic conditions, Wirral continues to see a steady stream of investment in development activity. Notably, this includes:

New Brighton Phase 2

Phase 2 of the New Brighton development has now begun. The project will provide a new supermarket, cinema, budget hotel, outdoor lido, associated leisure and restaurant offer and public realm improvements (including major improvements to the seafront promenade) and will create over 700 new jobs within the local economy.

Wirral Waters: Northbank

Wirral Council has also approved Peel Holding's Northbank East proposal that will see some £200m investment and create around 1,000 jobs, in construction and proposed office and retail uses in Birkenhead and Wallasey's docks.

Wirral Waters: East Float

The Northbank East proposals are part of Peel's wider masterplan for the East Float area, a major component of the Wirral Waters scheme, which saw one of the largest planning applications in the UK submitted, comparable only with nationally important projects such as Greenwich Peninsula and the Olympics and its legacy. The East Float application was submitted in December 09.

Wirral Waters: Bidston Moss

A planning application from Peel Holdings is expected for Bidston Dock before the end of the financial year. Bidston Moss contains proposals for the construction of high quality retail, leisure and some residential development to transform the area

In addition to the above the Authority is continuing to promote a wide range of opportunities across the borough including Woodside, the golf resort, and The Mersey Coast project.

Conclusion

Since the onset of the recession, the Council and its partners have worked hard to ensure that we properly understand how it is impacting on the local economy, and in response have launched a number of initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact on businesses and the local community. The Council continues to lead partners in taking forward a co-ordinated and coherent response to the economic situation. This partnership approach and clear strategic economic priorities means that Wirral is in a

strong position to understand the impact of worsening economic conditions, and to develop effective responses.

Feedback indicates that the activities designed for increasing enterprise and employment in Wirral have had some positive impact, and make the prospects for Wirral's economy remain good.

A twin track approach of providing support to individuals and businesses to mitigate the effects of the recession alongside continuing to deliver the Investment Strategy Aims in order to prepare for recovery has positioned Wirral to continue generating economic growth and deliver on the vision set out in its Investment Strategy.

This Recovery Plan sets out the strategy being pursued by the Council and our partners to mitigate the impact of the recession locally, but at the same time maintain momentum on our medium and longer term economic goals and our overarching vision to build a more prosperous and equal Wirral.

Regular (quarterly) updates will be brought to members and partners on a quarterly basis so that we:

- (a) continue to understand changing economic conditions;
- (b) assess the impact of the proposed interventions;
- (c) continue to develop appropriate and effective responses

Appendix 1

Actions and interventions agreed by Wirral partners

The Council and its partners will continue to meet regularly to agree the best ways to support Wirral residents and businesses in the current situation. The interventions outlined below detail some of the planned activity, developed in response to our detailed understanding of the recession. These actions will also help to have a positive impact on Wirral's short, medium and longer term corporate and LAA objectives that are set out within our Sustainable Community Strategy and partners' strategic plans. A key overarching driver running right across the Recovery Plan will be to help narrow the gap in outcomes for Wirral residents and businesses.

1. Supporting Wirral Businesses

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Advice and Information</u></p> <p>As many businesses will lack experience of operating during a recession it is important that these firms get access to advice early and adapt their business plans to changing market conditions.</p>	<p>Invest Wirral is working with Business Link to ensure that information is cascaded through and online business forums networks and Wirral Investment Network (WIN)</p> <p>We will continue to use the online local business network which further promotes key support services.</p> <p>We will circulate an up-to-date brochure with a breakdown of all of the support agencies that can help businesses.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Business Link</p>	<p>Take up of Information events and e-business information.</p> <p>Jobs safeguarded/created</p>
<p><u>Access to and Management of finance</u></p> <p>Advice and financial assistance are critical to help businesses to manage cash flow and to access finance</p>	<p>Wirral will continue to work with partners to develop a structured package of support to businesses in a direct response to the</p>	<p>Wirral Council</p>	<p>Number of business taking up grants for investment projects in</p>

	<p>recession.</p> <p>Flexible package of financial support eg Think Big Grants ; BIG Support Grant/ Consultancy Support</p>		<p>current economic climate. (Number of Jobs Safeguarded / Created)</p>
<p><u>Public sector procurement</u></p> <p>Wirral Council will support local businesses and explore how local firms can access public sector contract opportunities</p>	<p>Continue commitment to pay Council invoices within 10 days for all creditors from local businesses that employ less than 250 people.</p> <p>We have held bespoke workshops for local businesses to increase awareness of public sector procurement opportunities.</p>	<p>Wirral Council</p>	<p>Local Sustainability</p>
<p><u>Affordable premises and managed workspace</u></p> <p>There is a growing recognition of the need to develop a portfolio-based approach to intervention, ensuring that programmes provide not only early stage incubation and flexible managed workspace but also larger workspace units and grow-on space offered on more traditional terms</p> <p>Wirral Council will therefore prioritise the development of physical facilities to support businesses (workspace and one-stop shop business facilities)</p>	<p>Council Officers are investigating proposals to make additional bespoke units available to provide supported accommodation for new and fledging businesses. Eg Employment Land Survey.</p>	<p>Wirral Council</p>	<p>Additional workspace created</p>

<p><u>Recruitment and training</u> Feedback from businesses and partners indicates the adverse impact that the recession was starting to have on the availability of apprenticeship places in the borough</p>	Continue to develop the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme.	Wirral Council	Numbers and profiles of apprenticeships Reduction in NEET
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2. **Supporting Wirral Residents**

The recession is having an impact on Wirral residents. This section sets out the services that will be provided to minimise unemployment and debt, to support those facing redundancy, and also to exploit opportunities that may arise during recession.

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Employment Support:</u> Wirral residents must have speedy and effective access to information, advice and guidance on employment and training services to help them back into work.</p>	<p>Key partners (Wirral Council, Jobcentre Plus, Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council) will continue to co-ordinate activity and additional provision to support those under threat or notice of redundancy and those recently unemployed.</p> <p>The Council will continue to ensure that additional activities commissioned through Working Wirral are used to complement mainstream provision, helping to improve local people's skills and employment prospects.</p>	JCP, LSC, Connexions, Wirral Council.	Increased employment rates

<p><u>Wirral partners will work to minimise the impact of the recession on young people</u></p> <p>Feedback from Greater Merseyside Connexions ¹ highlights that the recession is likely to impact on post-16 retention in education and training.</p> <p>Data indicates that young people are being particularly affected by the recession. This is particularly true of vulnerable young people such as care leavers and those with disabilities.</p>	<p>Mainstream partners will deliver an enhanced package of support for 18-24 year olds through the young persons guarantee. The 14-19 curriculum will be developed further in partnership with employers to make sure that young people have the right skills for the labour market. Wirral will establish a new Academy in Birkenhead with a specialism in “Applied Learning in Science, Health and Social Care”. This will be done in partnership with two universities and two colleges.</p> <p>We will continue the implementation and expansion of the Future Jobs Fund initiative to create many new opportunities for Wirral residents, particularly young people.</p> <p>Wirral partners will target activity to address the numbers of those aged 18-24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)</p> <p>Continuation of the Activity Agreement Pilot</p>	<p>JCP, Connexions, Wirral Council and its schools, Wirral Met College, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, University of Chester, University of Liverpool</p> <p>WEDS partners</p> <p>Connexions</p>	<p>Increased employment rates</p> <p>Improved progression rates into HE particularly in science and health related area</p> <p>Numbers of FJF starts</p> <p>Reduction in JSA rates. NEET Reduction</p> <p>There will be targeted</p>
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¹ *'The Impact of the Recession on the Employment Prospects of the Young People of Wirral'* (April 2009) Carolyn Kershaw: Great Merseyside Connexions Service.

	through Connexions, aimed at 16 & 17 year old NEET and NEET vulnerable groups, until March 2011		initiatives to improve the employment prospects of care leavers, young people with disabilities and young offenders.
<p><u>Tackling Debt and Financial exclusion</u></p> <p>Feedback from voluntary sector organisations demonstrates a substantial increase in service users. Wirral Advice Network indicates significantly increased demand for debt advice over the last year.</p>	<p>Locally based advice services are vital for the most vulnerable sections of the community.</p> <p>Wirral Council will work with partners including RSLs, voluntary groups and community advice agencies to increase the capacity and availability of advice for residents that are struggling to cope with the recession.</p>	Wirral Council, Third Sector partners, Wirral Advice Network, CAB, RSLs	<p>No of people seen at financial advice and health surgeries within One Stop Shops</p> <p>No who have taken up Fair Debt policy</p> <p>Development of Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy which will set a list of measurable actions.</p> <p>Possibly: No of free home computers distributed through new central government scheme (C&YPD)</p>

<p><u>Availability of business start up services</u></p> <p>For some, the recession will be an appropriate time to start a new business. It is essential that Wirral residents (particularly those facing redundancy or newly unemployed) have access to appropriate advice and support.</p>	<p>Wirral has had considerable success in supporting business start ups and sustaining new businesses.</p> <p>Wirral partners will continue to provide tailored advice and support to new enterprises to exploit new markets and to successfully establish themselves in Wirral</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Wirral Biz</p>	<p>Numbers of new business starts and sustained</p>
<p><u>Securing local jobs</u></p> <p>Businesses will continue to recruit during the recession.</p> <p>There are also still a number of significant regeneration initiatives taking place.</p>	<p>It is important that new and emerging opportunities are made available to local residents. Wirral partners will ensure that local people are supported to benefit from such opportunities</p> <p>Local labour commitments such as the Construction Integrator will seek to maximise the engagement and recruitment of local workless residents in major capital projects, housing refurbishments and related activities across Wirral through agreements that could be brokered with employers.</p>	<p>Wirral Council Regeneration Officers</p>	<p>Numbers of local residents taking up employment</p>
<p><u>Mortgage Rescue Scheme</u></p> <p>The recession is having an adverse effect on housing and homelessness. Help is needed to support people who are facing the real possibility of losing their homes.</p>	<p>Wirral will increase support to prevent homelessness and increase availability of affordable housing.</p>	<p>Wirral Council Housing Officers, Housing Partners</p>	<p>People requesting and receiving assistance</p>

	Eg Wirral was one of the first local authorities to introduce an intervention in line with the national mortgage rescue scheme		
<p><u>Supporting communities</u></p> <p>Although this recession is likely to be felt across all communities, it will inevitably exacerbate pressures faced by vulnerable groups.</p> <p>We will continue to engage with communities - eg through residents' surveys, Area Forums, Youth Forums, and police and health consultative groups to gain feedback on how the recession is impacting upon individuals, groups and communities</p>	<p>Wirral Council partners in housing support, children's services and social care will work in partnership to mitigate the worst impact as the financial strains on households begin to show</p> <p>The Council acknowledges the essential role of local communities and the Third Sector in growing the economy and tackling worklessness, and the increased potential for local social enterprise to contribute to this agenda. Through the 'Working Wirral' approach, Wirral has made good progress in building strong strategic and delivery partnerships with the Third sector and we look forward to building on these.</p>	<p>Wirral Council Adult Services, Children's Services</p> <p>Third Sector partners, Working Wirral</p>	<p>NI46-Adults with learning disabilities in paid employment.</p> <p>NI150- Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment</p> <p>The proportion of people of working age currently using Adult Social Services moving on to employment or voluntary activities.</p> <p>VCAW is placing itself in a position where they will gather evidence of trends and measure impact</p>

			Better early support leading to lower numbers of “Children in Need” than would otherwise be the case
<u>Tackling Child Poverty</u>	<p>Wirral has some significant concentrations of child poverty and tackling the causes and impacts are a key priority for Wirral partners.</p>	<p>Wirral partners will continue to build on local level analysis of child poverty, in line with the new duties on local authorities set out within the proposed Child Poverty Bill;</p> <p>We will collate local data and analysis to identify the extent of child poverty in Wirral (including in-work poverty) and co-ordinate activity as the basis for our local child poverty needs assessments</p> <p>We will continue to work with LCR partners to develop the Child Poverty Commission. We will continue to develop our network of Children’s Centres to provide support for families including high quality child care.</p>	<p>Wirral Council and LSP Partners</p> <p>Reduction in levels of Child Poverty – Including in-work poverty and NI 116 Child Poverty which impacts on worklessness targets.</p>

3. **Investing in Skills**

Skills are the key to sustainable employment and a strong and competitive economy. This is important during a recession, but also in the future as employers look to improve their competitiveness in preparation for when the economy starts to recover.

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Employer Responsive Training</u></p> <p>The skills of employees are the most important assets for any company. Wirral partners will enable funding and training to firms that want to invest in their future competitiveness by improving the skills and qualifications of their staff.</p>	<p>Wirral Council is working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Job centre Plus (JCP) to deliver an Integrated Employment and Skills programme across Greater Merseyside.</p> <p>Partners will continue to develop appropriate pre-recruitment and in work training programmes eg Train to Gain to enable more individuals and employers to become eligible and benefit from training.</p>	<p>LSC and, from April 2010, its successor bodies</p>	<p>Employer Engagement framework</p> <p>Numbers of participants</p>
<p><u>Access to adult learning</u></p> <p>Training schemes covering the skills demanded by employers will be available to Wirral residents</p>	<p>Wirral partners have developed a wide range of training opportunities to improve employability including improving basic skills, learning to use computers or re-training for a new career.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, FE Colleges,</p>	<p>Training participation rates; increase in skills and qualifications</p>
<p><u>Apprenticeships and trainee places for young people</u></p> <p>It is essential that young people are supported to get a good start in their chosen career</p>	<p>Apprenticeship Programme</p> <p>We will continue to develop the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme growing it from an initial 100 apprentices to 170 by September 2010.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Connexions, NAS</p>	<p>Numbers and profiles of apprentices from vulnerable groups eg NEET</p>

4. Improving Health

It is anticipated that the recession will have a negative impact on the health of the population, particularly those adversely affected by redundancy and those experiencing economic and social problems

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Improving the health of Wirral residents</u></p> <p>Health partners, both locally and regionally, are prioritising how the NHS can mitigate the impact of the recession through health inequalities prevention activities; service provision and corporate citizen role, e.g. recruitment and workforce and procurement.</p> <p>Wirral partners have a clear commitment to reducing health inequalities in Wirral and will work in partnership to tackle the socio-economic links between low income, unemployment and ill-health.</p>	<p>A diverse range of services including:</p> <p>Improving peoples' quality of life and how long they live by addressing the underlying socio-economic determinants of health;</p> <p>Improving access to services for people with poor health;</p> <p>A key priority is to reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>Joint projects to support people with a health condition into training and employment.</p> <p>The Primary Care Advice Liaison (PCAL) service offers a service to a wide number of people with more complex inter-related issues including debt, repossession and worsening mental health.</p>	<p>NHS Wirral, Wirral Council, Third Sector partners</p>	<p>Reducing levels of lifestyle risk factors strongly associated with poverty and ill health such as smoking</p> <p>Number of people from most deprived areas accessing prevention activities</p> <p>Number of people on benefits or at risk of losing employment as a result of poor health supported into education, training and employment</p> <p>Number of people with underlying health issues helped to access and sustain employment</p>

5. **Housing and Homelessness**

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Preventing homelessness</u></p> <p>Until economic confidence improves, the housing market is likely to struggle. Housing partners will continue to develop services designed to prevent homelessness and stave off repossessions.</p>	<p>The recession has prompted a change in the targets for new-build housing as part of the HMRI programme, re-phasing of HMRI development programmes, changing tenure of new-build schemes.</p> <p>Wirral Council has allocated additional resources to address increasing Housing Benefit claims.</p> <p>Housing Officers are putting more resources into repossession prevention via third party specialist service such as debt advice.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Strategic Housing Partners</p>	<p>Payment of benefits claims and actioning of changes in circumstances (NI's 180 /181) <i>Note: Claims and associated changes are paid promptly and well within national standards, all claims being initially considered within 3 days of receipt. Fast tracking operates where appropriate</i></p>
<p>The recession has caused a shift in strategic housing priorities towards creating opportunities to support and enable the occupation of new-build housing particularly by first-time buyers.</p>	<p>This has been in the form of developing options for shared equity, rent-to-buy and making the most of national initiatives such as HomeBuy Direct.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Strategic Housing Partners</p>	<p>Increased access to housing opportunities</p>

6. Community Safety, Fire and Rescue

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
<p><u>Partners will work to mitigate the impacts of the recession.</u></p> <p>Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS): Historically commercial fires increase as businesses fail, and there is often an increase in vehicle fires.</p> <p>Domestic fires are known to increase as statistically and anecdotally unemployed people become at more risk from fires in the home.</p> <p>Anti social behaviour fires can be tracked to SOA's experiencing higher levels of multiple deprivation.</p>	<p>Responses include the setting up of a new joint Police/Fire team with the remit of tackling arson related insurance fraud. This follows unprecedented rise in fire related insurance claims across the UK and is believed to be linked to the financial down-turn.</p> <p>MFRS continues with joint action with operational crew getting to know what is going on in their locality and being extra vigilant whilst about their communities, and linking with specialist advocates such as arson, and ASB advocates.</p> <p>MFRS continues to support campaigns run by the Fire Support Network and other partners and to work closely with Wirral community safety team.</p>	<p>MFRS</p> <p>Community Safety Teams</p>	<p>Reductions in incidents</p>
<p>Community Safety Recent evidence suggests that there has been an increase in the number of burglaries committed in people's homes across Wirral, although it is uncertain whether this can be attributed to the recession.</p> <p>Longer term time-lag effects of the recession still need to be considered and trends will continue to be monitored.</p>	<p>Partners will continue to review crime figures to ascertain any correlation with the recession.</p> <p>Burglary levels are monitored on a daily basis.</p>	<p>Community Safety Partners</p>	<p>The aim is to reduce overall crime figures.</p> <p>The Wirral wide increase in burglary figures will be closely monitored.</p>

			Continuing reduction in the levels of acquisitive crime, first time entrants into the justice system, and re-offending rates
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7. Growing Wirral's Economy: The Investment Strategy

This Recovery Plan is an important part of Wirral's overarching economic vision for Wirral. Wirral Council has, together with our partners, identified the need to prioritise the economic well being of the Borough through increasing investment and enterprise, and reducing economic inactivity. We have developed a comprehensive Investment Strategy and made good progress with partners through our Working Wirral Investment Framework and our LAA.

The Issue	Response	Lead Partner(s)	Area of Impact
The Investment Strategy will help to focus the activity of public and private partners, accelerate development activity in key sites and maximise opportunities to create local jobs and new business.	<p>This is illustrated in our use of Working Wirral. The areas of focus for Working Wirral funding are intended to address structural issues and to maximise the competitiveness and long-term growth of Wirral businesses in order to foster a step change in performance (through both demand and supply-side measures).</p> <p>However, these interventions also have an important role to play in increasing the resilience of local businesses to withstand the current difficult trading conditions and will serve to increase the longer term potential of the Wirral business base when economic growth returns.</p>	Wirral Council	Outputs achieved against Investment Framework Priorities

<p><u>Better ICT infrastructure.</u> Fast and reliable internet connectivity are important influences on business decisions on where to locate and relocate</p>	<p>Wirral has commissioned a digital infrastructure scoping study with the aim of that will provide Wirral with a world class ICT network to support future development activity and increase investment into the area</p> <p>The introduction of a local fibre-optic broadband infrastructure could provide an important source of competitive advantage</p> <p>In addition, the roll-out of high-speed service would have a major impact on the delivery of local services in areas such as transport, housing, health and education and has the potential to generate significant social benefits.</p>	<p>Wirral Council</p>	<p>Production of feasibility study to capture the likely scale and drivers of demand (by business, sector and location) and identify key opportunities for increasing next-generation access availability</p> <p>Subsequent creation of new broadband infrastructure including backhaul facilities</p> <p>Upgrade of existing broadband infrastructure</p>
<p><u>Marketing Wirral nationally and internationally</u></p> <p>The need for Wirral businesses to expand their markets from the competitive and limited parameters that they often operate in is clear.</p>	<p>We will work with local businesses and strategic contacts to position Wirral to attract business investment through the 'Think Big' marketing plan and materials.</p> <p>We will assist SMEs that have the potential to</p>	<p>Wirral Council</p>	<p>Progress towards Investment Marketing Objectives</p>

<p>The composition of the Wirral economy suggests that a high proportion of businesses are not experienced in the development of new markets. This is a significant constraint on the growth potential of SMEs as international markets provide a significant opportunity for growth as the global economy emerges from recession.</p>	<p>expand to export their product or service for the first time, along with assistance to those SMEs that have been identified as having limited involvement in doing business overseas.</p> <p>We will seek to develop new markets in a proactive and strategic manner. Provision of a wide range of international trade support for SMEs in Wirral that are looking to enter or develop new international markets could help them to grow their business.</p> <p>We will continue to raise Wirral's national and international profile, promote local businesses and work to attract investment at significant international events such as the Shanghai Expo 2010 and Mipim.</p> <p>We will continue to market Wirral internationally and maximise Wirral's cultural and economic opportunities through our links with Suzhou.</p>		<p>Progress towards Think Big project outcomes</p> <p>Progress towards International Links Project outcomes</p>
<p><u>Destination Marketing</u></p> <p>We have identified the need to market Wirral's tourism offer, more efficiently and effectively, using existing visitor research.</p>	<p>We will effectively and efficiently market the Wirral Peninsula as a quality investment and visitor destination, and create a sustainable environment that benefits both the local community and existing businesses alike.</p> <p>We have developed a targeted marketing</p>	<p>Wirral Council, WTBN partners</p>	<p>Key Objectives of the Wirral Destination Marketing Implementation Plan</p>

	strategy and campaign (local, regional, national and international) to attract agreed and sustainable investment.		
<p><u>Innovation, Technology and R&D</u></p> <p>Wirral economy faces a clear productivity challenge, as evidenced by its low GVA per worker. Wirral has too many firms operating in low value added market segments</p>	<p>We will support Wirral firms to be more innovative in order to become more competitive and to create high-value jobs and attract high-skilled workers.</p> <p>Partners will drive up the level of university-business engagement and knowledge transfer and to build the business base's innovation capacity and commitment and extend the reach of R&D to smaller companies.</p>	Wirral Council, Chester University, FE Colleges,	<p>Development of the University Challenge proposal.</p> <p>Support for implementation of business processes to improve innovation performance</p> <p>Support for the development of new products for market using new technologies</p>
<p><u>Increase Inward Investment</u></p> <p>Wirral's inward investment performance has improved in recent years and we will continue to build on this.</p> <p>We need to attract high value added job-creating inward investment as the global economy emerges from recession.</p>	<p>Given the broad range of issues that Wirral faces, a variety of solutions will be required:</p> <p>to advise on investments that may help the business develop and strengthen;</p> <p>developing a strategic approach to firms marketing needs and helping them to access new markets;</p>	Wirral Council	Increase in inward investors

<p><u>Continuing to promote new development in Wirral</u></p> <p>We will continue to make good progress towards our economic vision for Wirral, despite the difficult economic conditions.</p>	<p>In the last year alone, we have helped 80 companies to create over 400 jobs, safeguarded over 500 local jobs and secured over £17million of private sector investment.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the New Brighton development will provide a new supermarket, cinema, budget hotel, outdoor lido, associated leisure and restaurant offer and public realm improvements (including major improvements to the seafront promenade) and will create over 700 new jobs within the local economy.</p>	<p>Wirral Council and strategic partners</p>	<p>Progress towards delivery of Investment Strategy</p>
	<p>In Wirral, Peel Holdings are promoting a mixed use development with a value of £4.5 billion, to regenerate Wirral's docklands.</p> <p>Wirral Council and Liverpool City Council are working with partners in a New Growth Point bid to provide new homes and an improved environment in the most deprived areas of Wirral, within the Housing Market Renewal Area.</p>	<p>Wirral Council, Peel Holdings, Strategic partners</p>	<p>Progress towards delivery of Investment Strategy</p>

Conclusion

The Council continues to lead partners in taking forward a co-ordinated and coherent response to the current economic situation. Despite prevailing economic conditions, the prospects for Wirral's economy remain good. A twin track approach of providing support to individuals and businesses to mitigate the effects of the recession, alongside continuing to deliver the Investment Strategy has positioned Wirral to prepare for recovery, to continue generating economic growth and deliver on the economic vision set out in its Investment Strategy.